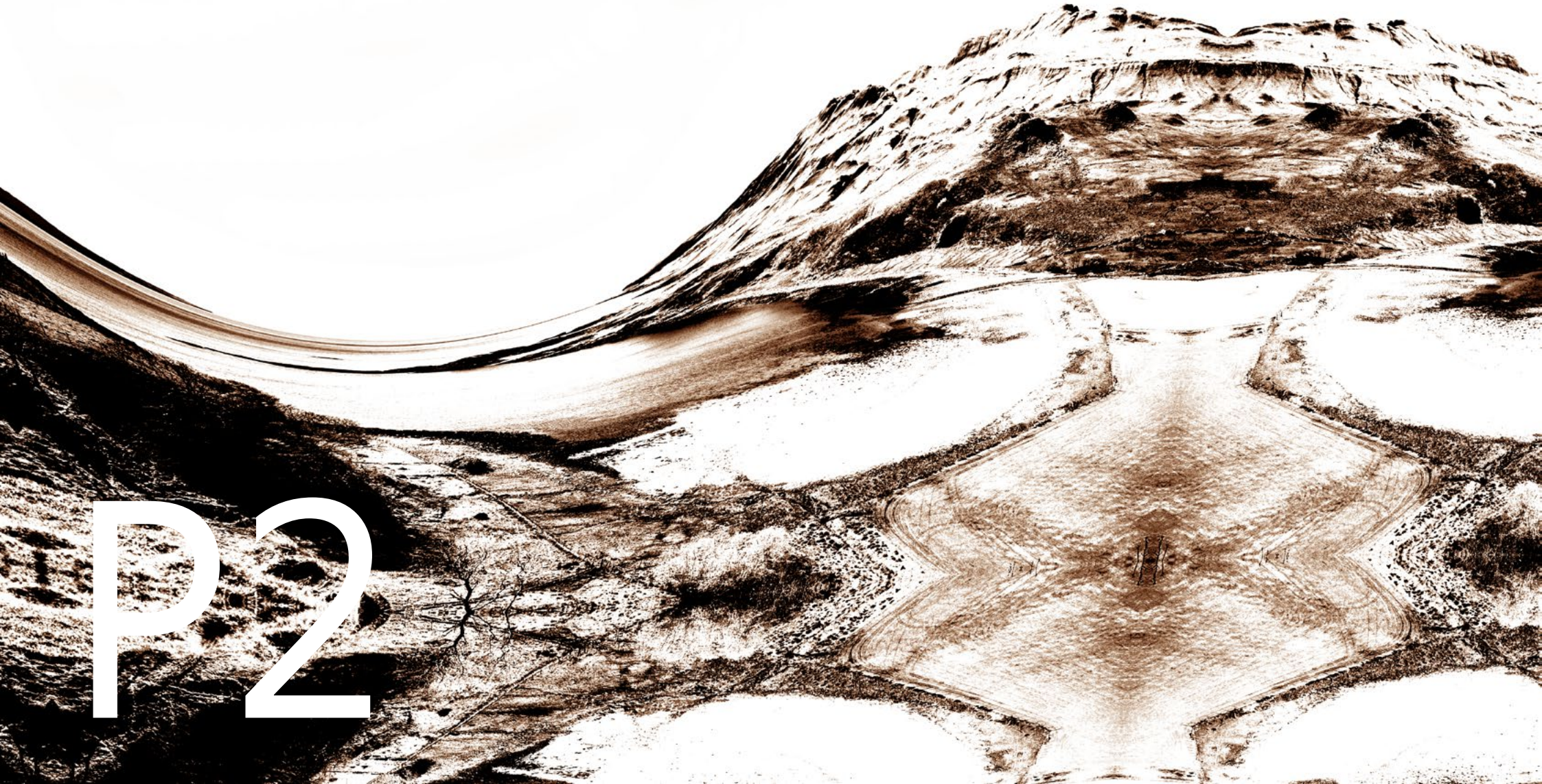
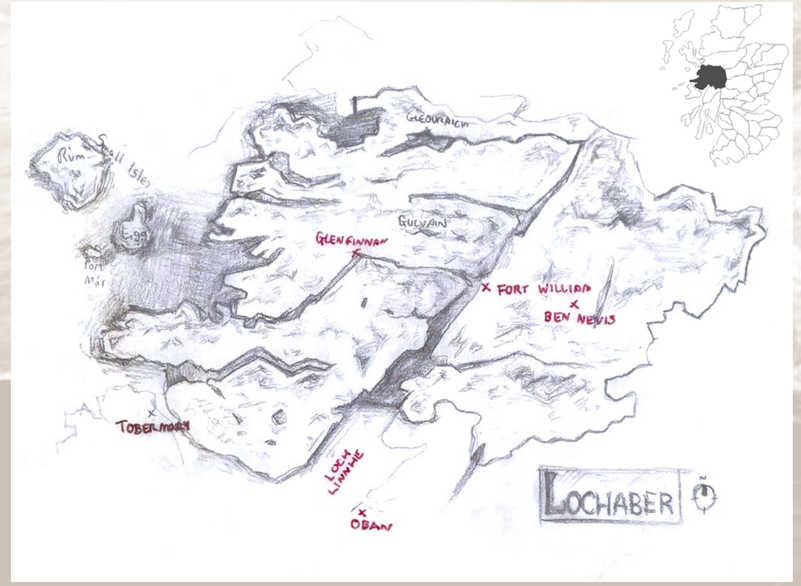
ALEXANDER MURRAY
MSA Stage 3 [24/25] - 22023585

Ardnamurchan Field Guide





P2 Ben Haint Field Guide

4 - Evolution of the Lochaber Landscape

6 - Site Survey / Overview

10 - Geology & Tectonics

12 - Evolution of Ardnamurchan

16 - Sketches of the Trail

The Evolution of the Lochaber Landscape

Lochaber was historically romanticized as an unspoiled wilderness that inspired painters and poets, yet its legacy of crofting, contested land ownership, as well as early extractive activities reveals a more complex story.

Industrial pursuits and land clearances challenged the pristine image, while modern rewilding and conservation efforts now redefine the region as a dynamic system where natural processes and human interventions coexist. This evolving landscape shows that its true essence lies within its continuous transformation rather than a static, untouched past.

Glenfinnan Viaduct

Ben Nevis

Ardnamurchan Point

Dundreggan Rewilding Project

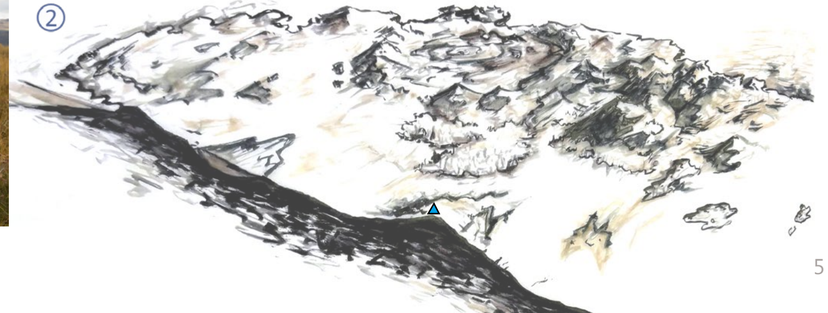
Projects such as the Dundreggan Rewilding Project are actively restoring native woodlands, which allows for enhanced soil health and biodiversity.

These targeted efforts address the environmental disruptions of past industrial activities and extractive practices, demonstrating how sustainable land management can repair/redefine the ever-evolving landscape. Reforestation efforts in Lochaber helps revitalise damaged ecosystems, as well as restoring a balanced dynamic where human operation and natural recovery work in unison.

: Sketch of Ben Hiant from aerial shot

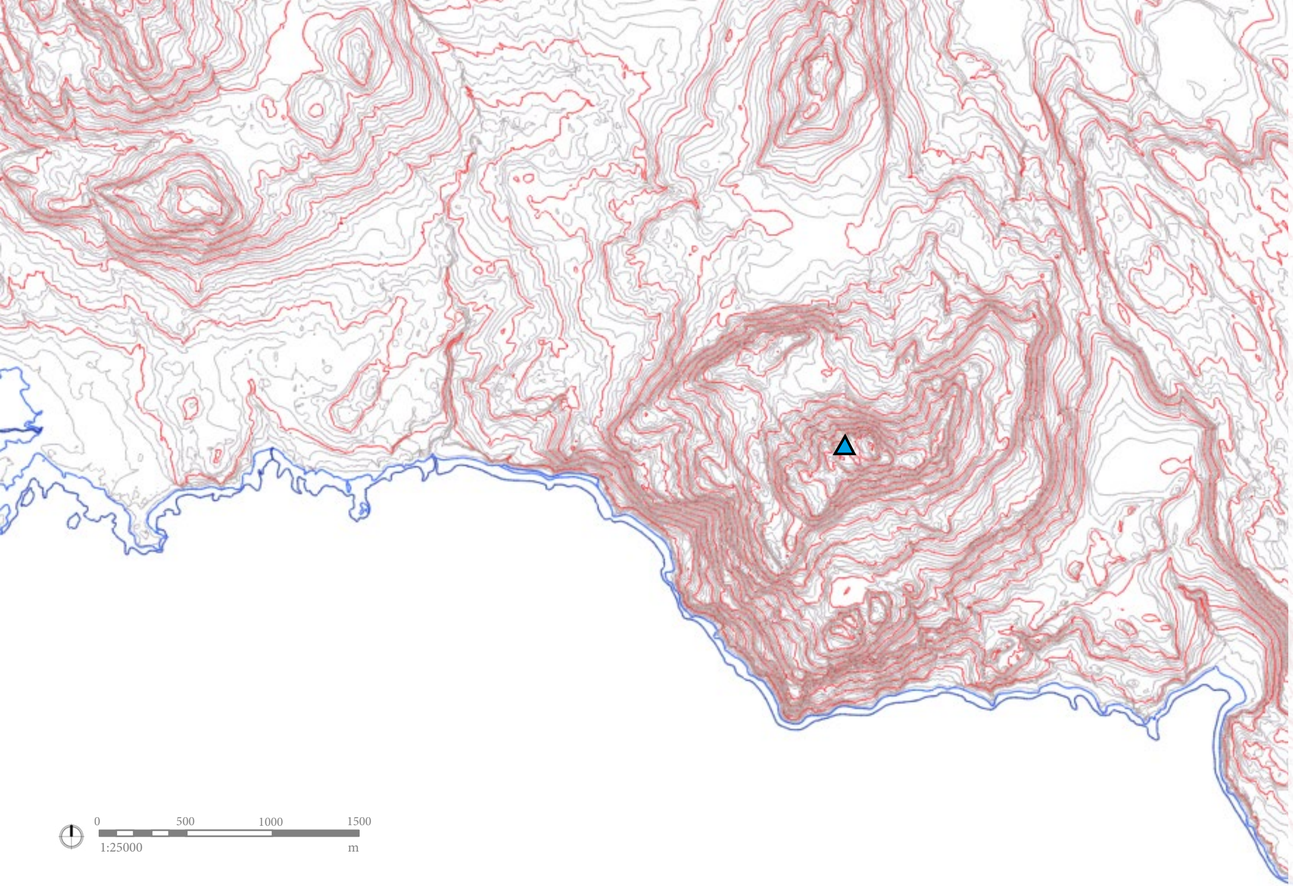
① : Ariel view of Ardnamurchan, section cut going through Ben Hiant to demonstrate its height

②



Sketch: Panoramic view from peak

- Ⓐ Corrachadh Mór（Most Westerly point of Mainland UK）
- Ⓑ Ardnamurchan Lighthouse
- Ⓒ Sanna Bay
- Ⓓ The Small Isles（Rúm, Eigg, Port Mór & Canna）
- Ⓔ Tobermory



Ben Hiant

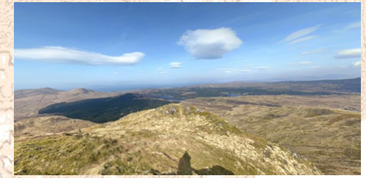
Ben Hiant, located in South-West Lochaber, is the tallest mountain in the Ardnamurchan peninsula. Despite only standing at 528m tall, this hill is a very rewarding trail to climb - as at the peak of the mountain, you are rewarded with a beautiful panoramic view which captures the dramatic blend of ancient volcanic formations, rewilded moorlands and scattered cultural landmarks which reveal the evolving character of Lochaber.

From the peak of Ben Hiant, the jaunted outline of Corrachadh Mór (the most westerly point of mainland UK) stands boldly against the Atlantic, while the historic Ardnamurchan Lighthouse and the quaint settlements along Sanna Bay can be seen in the distance.

These landmarks, shaped by both natural forces and human intervention, highlights the interplay between history, industry, and conservation within Lochaber's landscape.

Rather than a fixed ideal, the view from Ben Hiant reflects a region in constant transformation, where past and present coexist within the shifting boundaries of land and sea.

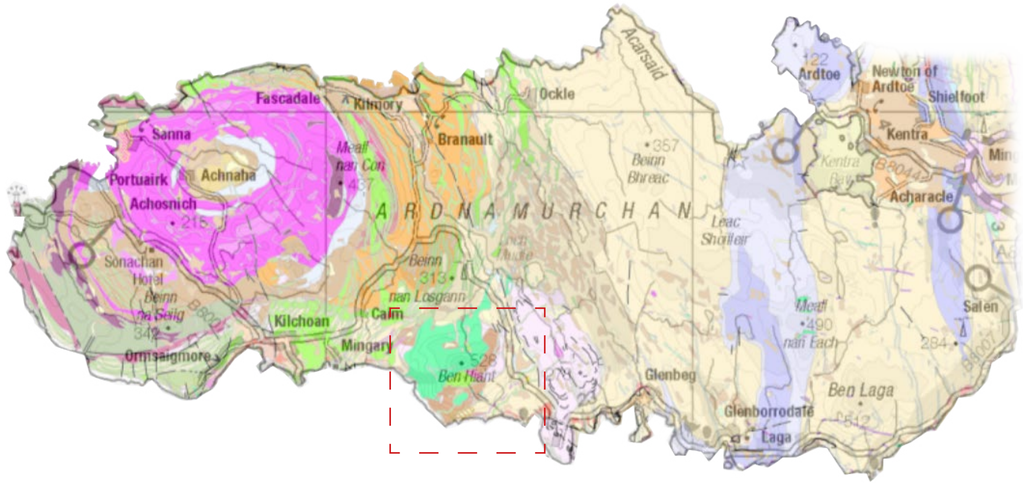
View of peak from trail

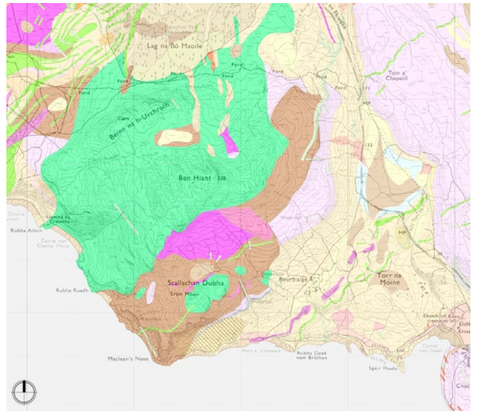


View from peak facing NW

View from peak facing SW

Geological Composition



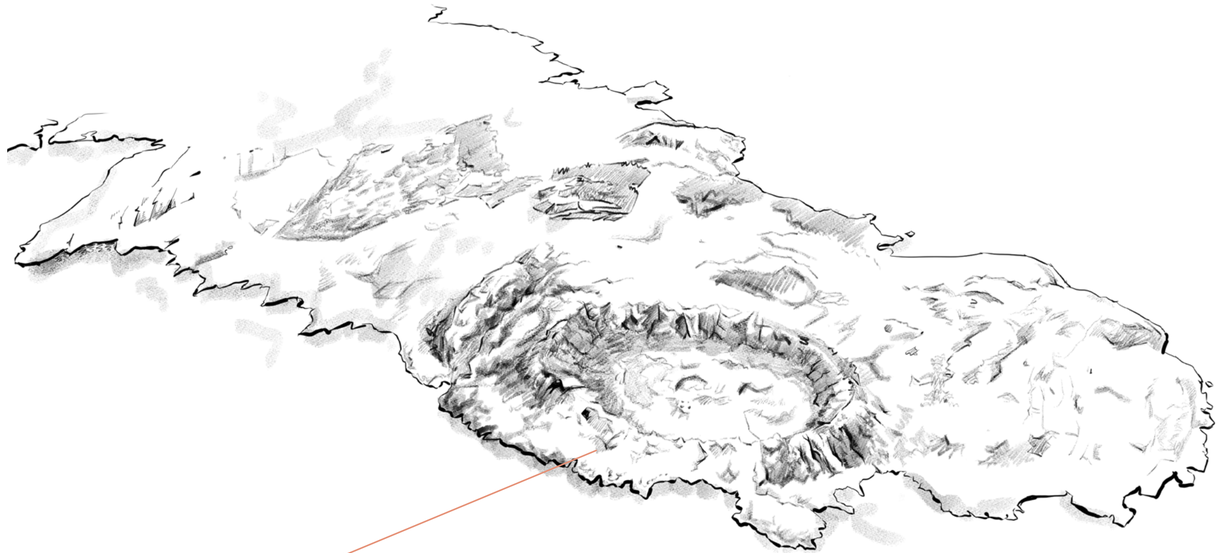


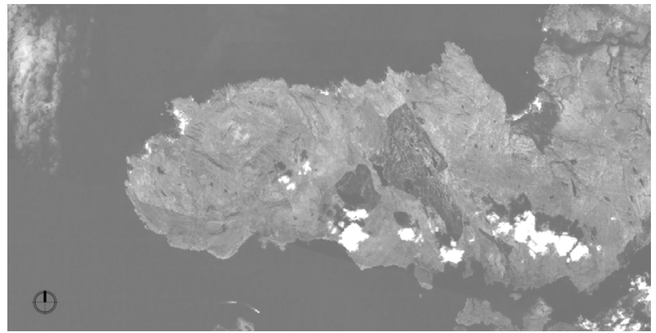
- Ben Hiant Intrustion – Quartz Microgabbro
- Ben Hiant Poryphytric Dolerite Intrustion – Feldsparphyric Dolerite
- Ben Hiant Pitchstone Sheetswarm – Andesitic Pitchstone
- Mull Plateu Lavas Formation – Basalt Lava
- Ardnamurchan Central Complex – Basalt and Dolerite
- Morar Group – Psammite with Semipelite and Pelite
- Ben Hiant Breccia Member – Volcaniclastic-Sandstone and Volcaniclastic Braccia

Evolution of Ardnamurchan

Ben Hiant is a remnant of an ancient volcano which was active during the Paleogene period.

This volcano was a part of the Ardnamurchan volcanic complex which was active roughly 60 million years ago. This early volcanic activity laid down a diverse array of indigenous rocks, such as quartz-dolerite, breccias, pitchstone, basalt lavas, cone sheets and Moine schist.

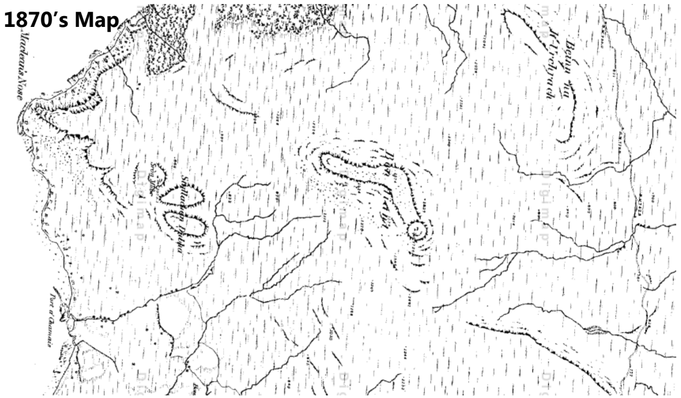




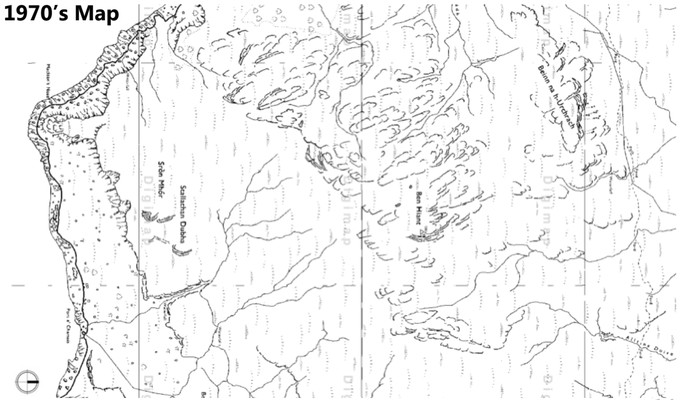
1873 Depiction of Southern Ardnamurchan
by unknown

1973 Depiction of Southern Ardnamurchan
by Hamish B. Lawrie

1870's Map



1970's Map



New v. Old [Bourblaige]

Sketches of the Trail